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# 08/26/2003 - Jean Wolski Named EIU's 2003-2004 Faculty Laureate

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# NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

## JEAN WOLSKI NAMED EIU'S 2003-2004 FACULTY LAUREATE

CHARLESTON – Early in her teaching career, Jean Wolski taught soon-to-be farm mechanics how to live.

“Students went there to learn a skill and a trade,” she said, referring to the small Iowan community college where she was employed. “I was interested in expanding their range of experience. I wanted them to develop their imaginations, induce their powers of creative thinking.

“I wanted to see them develop the entire human person,” she added.

And that she did. As she and a few others with similar goals in mind provided instruction in music, art, theatre and literature, they saw their students discover interests beyond what they had brought with them as incoming freshmen. Soon students and teachers found themselves greeting each other outside the classroom – at concerts, at plays...

“They liked what they had learned outside their chosen field of study,” Wolski said. “They liked it and chose to incorporate it into their everyday lives.”

Today, nearly 25 years later, Wolski still focuses on her students’ development as “well-rounded human beings.” And this commitment has led to her selection as Eastern Illinois University’s 2003-2004 Faculty Laureate.

As such, and in addition to her duties as a full-time faculty member in the Department of Theatre Arts, she will spend the coming school year as the university’s official spokesperson on the importance of general/liberal education. Her first official opportunity will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 3, when she delivers the keynote address at this year’s Fall Convocation, a welcoming ceremony for new incoming students.

The event, set to take place in the University Union Grand Ballroom, is open to the public.

Wolski also will receive a monetary stipend, will be profiled in a variety of university publications and will have the opportunity to represent faculty on a number of student committees.

Since arriving on Eastern’s campus in 1992, Wolski has earned a reputation as a well-versed and energetic teacher, “demanding but popular” among her students. And, according to one student, Wolski

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“extends the same warmth, enthusiasm and personality to all students, whether they are majors, minors or have no real relation to the department.”

According to Wolski, there exists in Berlin a small children’s theatre called “Grips” (slang for common sense) that caters to a wide range of audience members. On any given night, one might find small children standing in line with college professors, construction workers and Goth teenagers “with an air of camaraderie one wouldn’t have thought possible,” she said.

She added that the theatre’s motto – “Ein Kind mit ohne Kopf ist ein Krüppel Für Leben” (A child without a mind – without imagination – is a cripple for life) – bespeaks the company’s philosophy of the development of the individual as a whole.

“A strong general education program is concerned with exactly the same thing – the development of the whole person,” Wolski said. “The development of intuition, of imagination, is no less important than the development of intellect and is part of the essence of a full and enriching life.

“My background in creative dramatics and children’s theatre have led me to the conclusion that the objectives for creative drama – creativity and aesthetic development, critical thinking, social growth, improved communication skills, development of moral/spiritual values and knowledge of self – mirror the objective of the general education discipline. General education, by exposing the student to a variety of disciplines, prepares that student for living rather than just a job in life.

“And the insight gained through such an education enables the child, the college professor, the construction worker and the Goth teenager to stand together in that ticket line, sharing a common bond.”